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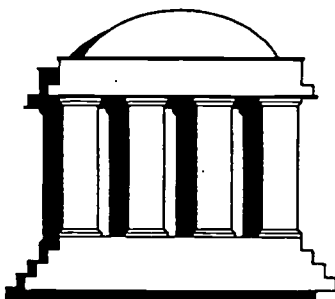
## ABSTRACT

This document offers a guide to enhance the quality of Michigan social studies teaching. The document draws on two sources, "A Vision of Powerful Teaching and Learning in the Social Studies" (National Council for the Social Studies) and "A Guide to Authentic Instruction and Assessment: Vision, Standards and Scoring" (Newmann, Secada, and Wehlage) to create six standards that blend the elements of both powerful and authentic social studies instruction. Part 1 presents a definition for each standard. Part 2 provides a scoring guide designed to stimulate reflection about powerful and authentic social studies among teachers working collegially in small groups, teams, or departments to improve their craft. The six standards defined are: (1) higher order thinking; (2) deep knowledge; (3) substantive conversation; (4) connections to the world beyond the classroom; (5) ethical valuing; and (6) integration. Includes the Lesson Score Sheet. (EH)

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# Powerful and Authentic Social Studies (PASS)

## Standards for Teaching (June, 1996)



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## Introduction

In July 1995 the State Board of Education adopted content standards which establish what students are expected to know and be able to do as a result of a good social studies education. These standards comprise what the revised Michigan school code of 1996 calls the Model Core Academic Curriculum for Social Studies. According to the State Board of Education, the purpose of these standards is twofold: to guide local schools in the design of social studies curriculum and to drive state assessments in social studies.

With social studies curriculum standards in place, the call has been sounded for teaching standards. What kind of classroom instruction by teachers will enable students to meet the new curriculum standards? The Michigan Social Studies Education Project has turned to recent scholarship in the field of social studies education in search of an answer to this question. Two prominent sources have emerged to guide the development of standards for social studies teaching that will encourage the kind of intellectual work necessary for students to meet the expectations of the Michigan Model Core Academic Curriculum.

The first source, *A Vision of Powerful Teaching and Learning in the Social Studies*, a position statement adopted by the National Council for the Social Studies in 1993, sets forth standards for powerful teaching. Powerful social studies produces students with the social understanding and civic efficacy the nation requires of its citizens. The second source, *A Guide to Authentic Instruction and Assessment: Vision, Standards and Scoring* by Fred M. Newmann, Walter Secada, and Gary Wehlage, was published in 1995 by the Wisconsin Center for Education Research. It sets forth standards for authentic instruction derived from a five-year national research study. Authentic social studies requires students to construct knowledge through disciplined inquiry to produce discourse, products, and performances that have meaning beyond success in school.

The standards from these two sources have been merged to produce a set of six standards that can be used to enhance the quality of social studies teaching. The combined standards blend the elements of both powerful and authentic social studies instruction. Part 1 which follows presents a definition for each standard. Part 2 then provides a scoring guide designed for using the standards in the professional development of social studies teachers. The scoring guide enables teachers to use the standards as a basis for rating the power and authenticity of social studies teaching. It is not intended for evaluating teachers or for competitive ranking of their work.

## Part 1: Defining the Standards

There are six standards for powerful and authentic social studies teaching:

1. Higher Order Thinking
2. Deep Knowledge
3. Substantive Conversation
4. Connections to the World Beyond the Classroom
5. Ethical Valuing
6. Integration

**Standard 1. Higher Order Thinking:** Instruction involves students in manipulating information and ideas by synthesizing, generalizing, explaining, hypothesizing, or arriving at conclusions that produce new meaning and understandings for them.

**Standard 2. Deep Knowledge:** Instruction addresses central ideas of a social studies discipline or topic with enough thoroughness to explore connections and relationships and to produce relatively complex understandings.

**Standard 3. Substantive Conversation:** Students engage in extended conversational exchanges with the teacher and/or their peers about subject matter in a way that builds an improved and shared understanding of ideas or topics.

**Standard 4. Connections to the World Beyond the Classroom:** Students make connections between substantive knowledge and personal experience, social problems, or public policy.

**Standard 5. Ethical Valuing:** Students consider core democratic values when making decisions on matters of public concern or when judging personal conduct.

**Standard 6. Integration:** Instruction broadens the scope of learning by spanning social studies disciplines, linking social studies to other subject areas, bridging time or place, blending knowledge with skills, or incorporating electronic technology.

## Part 2: Scoring Guide

The purpose of this scoring guide is to stimulate reflection about powerful and authentic social studies among teachers working collegially in small groups, teams, or departments to improve their craft. The guide presents scoring criteria for assessing the degree to which the six standards have been met in examples of actual social studies teaching.

Examples of teaching could take various forms including a written lesson plan that summarizes what both teachers and students do during a lesson, a written transcript or audio recording of what is actually said during a lesson, a live observation, or a videotape recording. The videotape recording offers several important advantages. Through editing, a valid sampling of what actually occurred during an entire lesson can usually be represented in a 15-20 minute video. Furthermore, both voice and image are captured providing more accuracy, and subtlety. Moreover, with an edited videotape at hand, a group can repeatedly review portions of a lesson to compare impressions and check details. Consequently, for PASS professional development programs, videotape recordings of lessons are recommended. The advantages of videotaping justify the advance technical preparations for ensuring good sound and picture as well as the time and skill required for editing. In a PASS program, the standards are first applied to lessons by Michigan teachers which are provided on video with this training manual. These lessons were recorded in schools across the state. The standards are then used to analyze teaching by colleagues in the professional development group, videotapes of which must be produced locally.

The six standards are considered equally important. Each standard is scored on a five-point scale. The descriptions which follow for scores 1-5 on each standard constitute the minimum criteria for that score. Scoring should follow these general rules:

- If in doubt between two scores, make the decision by asking whether the minimum conditions of the higher score have been met. If not, use the lower score.
- In determining scores for each standard, consider only the evidence recorded.
- “Many” students refers to at least one-third of the students in a class; “most” refers to more than half; “almost all” should be interpreted as all but a “few.”
- Scores should take into account what students can reasonably be expected to do at the grade level.

- Within a single lesson there might be reason to emphasize some standards instead of others. The ideal pattern of results would depend upon the goals for that day's class and its place within the larger scheme of things. Scores across standards should therefore not be summed or averaged. Rather, each standard should be considered individually.

## **Standard 1. Higher Order Thinking**

*Instruction involves students in manipulating information and ideas by synthesizing, generalizing, explaining, hypothesizing, or arriving at conclusions that produce new meaning and understandings for them.*

Higher order thinking (HOT) requires students to manipulate information and ideas in ways that transform their meaning and implications. This occurs when students combine facts and ideas in order to synthesize, generalize, explain, hypothesize, or arrive at some conclusion or interpretation. Manipulating information and ideas through these processes allows students to solve problems and discover new (for them) meanings and understandings. When students engage in HOT, an element of uncertainty is introduced into the instructional process and makes instructional outcomes not always predictable, i.e., the teacher is not certain what students will say. In helping students become constructors of knowledge, the teacher's main instructional task is to create activities or environments that allow them opportunities to engage in HOT.

Lower order thinking (LOT) occurs when students are asked to receive or recite factual information, or to employ rules or procedures through repetitive routines. As information receivers, students are given pre-specified knowledge ranging from simple facts and information to more complex concepts. Students are not required to do much intellectual work, since the purpose of instruction is simply to transmit knowledge or to practice procedural routines. Students are in a similar role when they are reciting previously acquired knowledge; i.e., responding to test-type questions that require recall of pre-specified knowledge. Even more complex activities may involve LOT if students only need to follow pre-specified steps and routines in rote fashion.

5 = Almost all students, almost all of time are performing HOT

4 = Students are engaged in at least one major activity during the lesson in which they perform HOT operations. This activity occupies a substantial portion of the lesson and many students are performing HOT.

3 = Students are primarily engaged in routine LOT operations during a good share of the lesson. There is at least one significant question or activity in which some students perform some HOT operations.

2 = Students are primarily engaged in LOT, but at some point they perform HOT as a minor diversion within the lesson.

1 = Students are engaged only in LOT operations, i.e. they either receive, or recite, or participate in routine practice, and in no activities during the lesson do students go beyond LOT.

## **Standard 2. Deep Knowledge**

*Instruction addresses central ideas of a social studies discipline or topic with enough thoroughness to explore connections and relationships and to produce relatively complex understandings.*

Knowledge is deep when central ideas of a topic or discipline are explored in considerable detail that shows interconnections and relationships. Knowledge is deep when, instead of being able to recite only fragmented pieces of information, students express relatively systematic, integrated or holistic understandings of central concepts. Mastery is demonstrated by students discussing relationships, solving problems, constructing explanations, and drawing conclusions.

Knowledge is superficial or thin when it does not deal with significant concepts or central ideas of a topic or discipline. Knowledge is also shallow when important, central ideas have been trivialized or when knowledge is presented as non-problematic. Knowledge is thin when important ideas are covered in a way that gives students only a surface acquaintance with their meaning. This superficiality can occur when teachers cover large quantities of fragmented ideas and bits of information that are unconnected to other knowledge. Evidence of shallow knowledge exists when students do not, or cannot, use knowledge to make clear distinctions or arguments, to solve problems, or to develop more complex understandings of other related phenomena.

Depth of knowledge and understanding can be indicated by the substantive character of the ideas that the teacher presents in the lesson, and by the level of understanding that students demonstrate as they consider these ideas. It is possible to have a lesson which contains substantively important, deep knowledge, but where students do not become engaged or where they fail to show understanding of the complexity or the significance of the ideas. The criteria below ask observers to consider both the depth of knowledge presented by the teacher and the depth of understanding that students develop of that content.

5 = Knowledge is very deep because during the lesson almost all students do at least one of the following: sustain a focus on a significant topic; or demonstrate their understanding of the problematic nature of information and/or ideas; or demonstrate complex understanding by arriving at a reasoned, supported conclusion; or explain how they solved a complex problem. In general, students' reasoning, explanations, and arguments demonstrate fullness and complexity of understanding.

4 = Knowledge is relatively deep because either the teacher or the students provide information, arguments or reasoning that demonstrate the complexity of an important idea. During the lesson many students do at



least one of the following: sustain a focus on a significant topic for a period of time; or demonstrate their understanding by arriving at a reasoned, supported conclusion; or explain how they solved a relatively complex problem.

- 3 = Knowledge is treated unevenly during instruction; i.e., deep understanding of something is countered by superficial understanding of other ideas. At least one significant idea may be presented in depth and its significance grasped, but in general the focus is not sustained.
- 2 = Knowledge remains superficial and fragmented; while some key concepts and ideas are mentioned or covered, only a superficial acquaintance or understanding of these complex ideas is evident.
- 1 = Knowledge is very thin because it does not deal with significant topics or ideas; the teacher and students are involved in the coverage of simple information which they are to remember.

### **Standard 3. Substantive Conversation**

*Students engage in extended conversational exchanges with the teacher and/or their peers about subject matter in a way that builds an improved and shared understanding of ideas or topics.*

In classes characterized by high levels of substantive conversation, there is sustained teacher-student and/or sustained student-student interaction about a topic; the interaction is reciprocal, and it promotes coherent shared understanding. Substantive conversation has three features:

- 1) The talk is about subject matter in the discipline and includes higher order thinking, such as making distinctions, applying ideas, forming generalizations, or raising questions; not just reporting of experiences, facts, definitions, or procedures.
- 2) The conversation involves sharing of ideas and is not completely scripted or controlled by one party (as in teacher-led recitation). Sharing is best illustrated when participants explain themselves or ask questions in complete sentences, and when they respond directly to comments of previous speakers.
- 3) The dialogue builds coherently on participants' ideas to promote improved collective understanding of a theme or topic (which does not necessarily require an explicit summary statement).

In short, substantive conversation resembles the kind of sustained exploration of content that is characteristic of a good seminar, where student contributions lead to shared understandings.

In classes where there is little or no substantive conversation, teacher-student interaction typically consists of a lecture with recitation, where the teacher deviates very little from delivering a preplanned body of information and set of questions. Students give very short answers. Because the teacher's questions are motivated principally by a preplanned checklist of questions, facts, and concepts, the discourse is frequently choppy, rather than coherent; there is often little or no follow-up of student responses. Such discourse is the oral equivalent of fill-in-the-blank or short-answer study questions. Student-to-students interaction can also reflect these qualities.

To recognize substantive conversation, we first define an interchange as a statement by one person and a response by another. Interchanges can occur between the same two people, but they must be linked substantively as consecutive responses.

To score 2 or above, conversation must focus on subject matter as defined in feature 1.

5 = All three features of substantive conversation occur, with at least one example of sustained conversation, and almost all students participate.

4 = All three features of substantive conversation occur, with at least one example of sustained conversation, and many students participate.

3 = Features 2 (sharing) and/or 3 (coherent promotion of collective understanding) occur and involve at least one example of sustained conversation (i.e., at least 3 conversation interchanges).

2 = Features 2 and/or 3 occur briefly and involve at least one example of two consecutive interchanges.

1 = Virtually no features or substantive conversation occur during the lesson.

#### **Standard 4. Connections to the World Beyond the Classroom**

*Students make connections between substantive knowledge and personal experience, social problems, or public policy .*

A lesson gains in authenticity and power the more there is a connection to the larger social context in which students live. There are at least three ways in which student activity in classrooms can reflect some connections to life beyond school. First, lessons might focus on understanding a real world public problem of some contemporary significance; for example, applying statistical analysis in preparing a report on the homeless to the city council. Second, lessons can build upon students' personal experiences to teach important ideas in the disciplines; for example, by comparing approaches to conflict resolution between people and nations. Finally, if students attempt to communicate their knowledge to others beyond the classroom, to influence or assist others, school knowledge is more likely to have value beyond simply achieving success in school. High scores depend upon the extent to which the lesson demonstrates these qualities.

- 5 = Students study or work on a topic, problem, or issue that the teacher and students see as connected to their personal experiences or actual contemporary public situations. Students recognize the connections between classroom knowledge and situations outside the classroom. They explore these connections in ways that create personal meaning and significance for the knowledge. This meaning and significance is strong enough to lead students to become involved in an effort to influence a larger audience beyond their classroom in one of the following ways: by communicating knowledge to others (including within the school), advocating solutions to social problems, providing assistance to people, or creating performances or products with utilitarian or aesthetic value.
- 4 = Students study or work on a topic, problem, or issue that the teacher and students see as connected to their personal experiences or actual contemporary public situations. Students recognize the connections between classroom knowledge and situations outside the classroom. They explore these connections in ways that create personal meaning and significance for the knowledge. However, there is no effort to use the knowledge in ways that go beyond the classroom to actually influence a larger audience.
- 3 = Students study a topic, problem, or issue that the teacher succeeds in connecting to students' actual experiences or to contemporary public situation. Students recognize some connections between classroom

knowledge and situations outside the classroom, but they do not explore the implications of these connections, which remain abstract or hypothetical. There is no effort to actually influence a larger audience.

- 2 = Students encounter a topic, problem, or issue that the teacher tries to connect to students' experiences or to contemporary public situations; i.e., the teacher informs students that there is potential value in the knowledge being studied because it relates to the world beyond the classroom. For example, students are told that understanding Middle East history is important for contemporary politicians trying to bring peace to the region; however, the connection is unspecified and there is no evidence that students make the connection.
- 1 = The lesson topic and activities have no clear connection to anything beyond themselves; the teacher offers no justification beyond the need to perform well in school.

## **Standard 5. Ethical Valuing**

*Students consider core democratic values when making decisions on matters of public concern or when judging personal conduct.*

A lesson that entails ethical valuing becomes more powerful and authentic because it involves students in considering what is right or wrong, fair or unfair, just or unjust. Over time, this kind of reflection enables students to develop a reasoned commitment to the core values of a democratic society. Students might be asked to evaluate policy alternatives or to judge the behavior of an individual or a group. As a result, they become more aware of the complexities involved in contemplating justice or virtue and they become more articulate about expressing and supporting their decisions.

Value-based decision making about people from the past or from other cultures should take into account the context of time and place that shaped the people's decisions and actions. Teachers may need to help their students understand the perspectives of the people under study, so as to avoid the fallacies of presentism and ethnocentrism. Presentism involves judging people from the past using contemporary knowledge and with the advantage of hindsight, instead of recreating the information available to the people and the perspectives that they held when they addressed the issues under study. Ethnocentrism involves judging people from other cultures using only the standards of one's own culture, without taking into account alternative standards to which people in other cultures may be responding. Judgments of people from the past or from other cultures will not be well informed unless students understand people "from within," and judge their perspectives accordingly.

Understanding of multiple perspectives does not imply agreeing with them, however. Students should be taught to evaluate decisions or actions based on the degree to which they support core democratic values, and thus to avoid relativism (as expressed in the notions that whatever people believe is right for them or that no particular value judgment is better or worse than any other). Within a democratic

framework, ethical values are not relative but universal in that they reflect enduring core values, especially belief in the equal dignity of all people regardless of time or place. Judgments about civic matters are justified in a democratic society by reference to objective ethical values and not merely to subjective opinions or feelings.

Although core democratic values are basic and enduring, they may be given different interpretations. The meaning of equality for example, has evolved over the course of American history. When we look back from the perspective of the 20th century to judge people who lived early in the 18th century, we should take into

account what they were capable of knowing and believing. Core values also may be given different priorities. Good social studies education will enable students to learn to confront the complexities involved when core values appear to conflict, as when policies advocated on the basis that they support one value (e.g., free press) might seem to contradict another value (e.g., fair trial).

When guiding students in deliberation, the teacher does not promulgate personal sectarian or political views but rather enables students to identify the ethical values involved in an issue or problem, consider the costs and benefits to various groups embedded in potential courses of action, and develop well-reasoned positions consistent with basic democratic values. When this is done most effectively, students may remain unsure about the teacher's personal views on an issue, at least until after it has been thoroughly deliberated.

The teacher helps students clarify the meanings of core democratic values and discern connections between them and the issue at hand. The teacher also guides students in constructing reasoned arguments and avoiding the fallacies of presentism, ethnocentrism, and relativism. When appropriate, students are challenged to reflect upon the accuracy of claims, the logic and clarity of arguments, and the ethical adequacy of value judgments. They are guided in recognizing possible conflicts between core democratic values and in attempting to resolve such conflicts.

5 = A value-based issue (unresolved question of public policy or personal conduct) is stated and most students discuss the issue in an effort to construct a position on it. At least one democratic value implied by the issue (e.g., religious liberty, the right to property, truth, equality under law) is identified and its meaning is clarified. At least one position on the issue is presented and reasons justifying the position are considered. At least one opposing position on the issue is considered. Many students participate in discussion by supporting, challenging, or clarifying statements.

4 = A value-based issue is stated and many students discuss the issue in an effort to construct a position on it. At least one democratic value implied by the issue is identified and its meaning is clarified. At least one position on the issue is presented and reasons justifying the position are considered. Many students participate in discussion by supporting, challenging, or clarifying statements.

3 = A value-based issue is stated and many students discuss the issue in an effort to construct a position on it. At least one democratic value implied by the issue is identified. At least one position on the issue is presented

and reasons justifying the position are considered.

2 = A value-based issue is stated and at least two students discuss the issue in an effort to construct a position on it. At least one position on the issue is presented and reasons justifying the position are considered.

1 = No value-base issue is discussed, or one is discussed but no position on the issue is stated, or a position is stated but not justified with reasons.



## **Standard 6. Integration**

*Instruction broadens the scope of learning by spanning social studies disciplines, linking social studies to other subject areas, bridging time or place, blending knowledge with skills, or incorporating electronic technology.*

Making social studies teaching integrative is not an end in itself and is not always worthwhile. Integration might even undermine the coherence of social studies if included for its own sake, unrelated to the goals of social understanding and civic efficacy. As a means to these goals, however, integration has the potential to enhance the power and authenticity of social studies teaching.

Several types of integration have this potential. Social studies disciplines (geography, history, government, economics, and the behavioral sciences) can be integrated to help students understand how more than a single discipline can deepen insight. Lessons can be even more powerful and authentic when they complement social studies learning with ideas drawn from arts, sciences, mathematics, and humanities. Students taught to connect the present to the past and to look ahead to the future, or to link their own community, state, or nation to other places are experiencing teaching with even greater power and authenticity. Furthermore, to avoid fragmented learning, powerful and authentic social studies integrates knowledge and skills rather than teaching each in artificial isolation. Skills are included when they are necessary for applying content in natural ways. They are taught directly when opportunities for practice are embedded in application activities. Content flow is not interrupted for practice of unrelated skills.

Integrated social studies teaching also includes effective use of technology that can add important dimensions to students' learning. Teachers can provide students with information through films, videotapes, videodiscs, and other electronic media, and they can teach students to use computers to compose, edit, and illustrate social studies research reports. Computer-based learning, especially games and simulations, can allow students to apply important ideas in authentic problem-tackling or decision making contexts. If students have access to computerized data bases, they can search these resources for relevant research information. If they can communicate with peers in other states or nations, they can engage in personalized cultural exchanges or compare parallel data collected in geographically or culturally diverse locations.

The types of integration can be summarized as follows:

**Interdisciplinary.** Two or more social studies disciplines are integrated.

**Curricular.** The main social studies topic of the lesson is connected to ideas from another subject area of the curriculum.

**Knowledge and Skills.** Practice of relevant skills is embedded in the learning of new content.

**Time and Place.** The present is bridged to the past or the future, or one place is connected to another by means of a social studies idea.

**Technology.** Electronic technology is used to enhance learning relevant to the lesson.

- 5 = The lesson incorporates at least three types of integration all of which serve to enhance the social understating or civic efficacy of students.
- 4 = The lesson incorporates two types of integration both of which serve to enhance the social understating or civic efficacy of students.
- 3 = The lesson incorporates one type of integration which serves to enhance the social understating or civic efficacy of students.
- 2 = The lesson incorporates one type of integration.
- 1 = The lesson incorporates none of the types of integration.

# Powerful and Authentic Social Studies (PASS)

## Lesson Score Sheet

Title of Lesson \_\_\_\_\_

Standard	Score
1. Higher Order Thinking	<input type="text"/>
2. Deep Knowledge	<input type="text"/>
3. Substantive Conversation	<input type="text"/>
4. Connections to the World Beyond the Classroom	<input type="text"/>
5. Ethical Valuing	<input type="text"/>
6. Integration	<input type="text"/>

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Scorer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



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